

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)

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HON. EDITOR : J. F. W. BRYON

Beckenham Public Libraries

## Editorial

THE mistake was too obvious to be deliberate ; nevertheless, we felt somewhat like Mr. Waldman soon after the Jubilee number was issued and the comments began to come in. "Funereal" and "In Memoriam" were the politest. One correspondent, Mr. P. V. Spooner, Camberwell Public Libraries, used black-edged notepaper and envelope for his rhymed remarks :

*The Association of Assistant Librarians*

*May encompass a host of barbarians,*

*But some discretion the Committee must lack*

*When they publish the Jubilee number in a cover of jet black.*

Some commentators were kind, and said they thought the cover smart, and one was curious as to how the inking was produced so evenly without "lift" from the paper.

The Committee must be exonerated from responsibility for the error : they were as shocked as other members. The printers have apologised for the faulty liaison between office and works which resulted in the change of colour from the green which had been approved, and have offered a credit in compensation, which the Council have accepted.

\* \* \*

In our own Jubilee year, we greet a distinguished contemporary for whom 1948 is also the fiftieth anniversary of foundation. The H. W. Wilson Co., publishers of renowned tools for librarians, began in 1898 with the first number of the *Book Index*, and since then has come to occupy a unique position in the library sphere. A list of the publications from this enterprising house will prove its present importance, and make the European librarian envious of his American colleague, who has at his disposal so impressive an array of indices, catalogues and digests. The libraries in the Old World *can* get by without recourse to the Wilson service, but they are the less effective in consequence. Would that the size of this country justified a parallel service for Britain' organizing the knowledge in cisatlantic publications.

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### Typographical Note

This issue of *The Library Assistant* is set in Times Roman 8 pt., 1-point leaded. The cover, running heads, title and headings are all in Perpetua.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

### Council Notes

FOR the first meeting of the 53rd Session of the A.A.L. Council the President—Mr. E. Cave—was in the chair and welcomed many new members to the Council.

It was agreed that the A.A.L. session of the L.A. Conference should be on Thursday, 6th May from 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. and that the Honorary Secretary and the Vice-President should attend the Conference as the Association's delegates.

One of the pleasures of appointing the officers of the Council is that it gives the Council an opportunity of thanking their hard-working colleagues—Mr. and Mrs. Martin as Honorary Education Secretaries, Mr. H. C. Twaits as Honorary Librarian, and Mr. L. H. Sidwell as Honorary Membership Secretary. Then came the election of Chairmen—Mr. Phillips as Chairman of the Council, Mr. Carver for the Finance and General Purposes, Miss Dean for the Benevolent Fund, Mr. Tighe for Education and Library, and Mr. Drewery for Press and Publications.

After an adjournment the committees returned to inform Council that *Sequels* was selling so well that reprinting is likely and that Hewitt's *Summary of Public Library Law* is to be sold at 6s., and 5s. to members of the A.A.L., L.A., and the trade. The Education and Library Committee reported that 70 per cent. of those who completed the correspondence courses passed their examinations but that only half of those who took courses completed them. The Hon. Treasurer had submitted his annual statement of income and expenditure to the Finance and General Purposes Committee; this committee also considered the scrutineers' report on the election of the 1948 Council which was as follows:—

Papers distributed	..	..	..	3,645
Valid papers returned	..	..	..	1,413
Paper rejected	..	..	..	1
<i>Elected</i>				<i>No. of votes</i>
Phillips, W. H.	..	..	..	1,045
Carver, A. L.	..	..	..	837
Corbett, E. V.	..	..	..	702
Hoy, R. J.	..	..	..	693
Wragg, Miss E. F.	..	..	..	652
Butler, Miss J.	..	..	..	635
<i>Not Elected</i>				
Taylor, C. W.	..	..	..	570
Woolley, Miss D.	..	..	..	511
Lynes, Miss A. G.	..	..	..	458
Tomlinson, O. S.	..	..	..	427
Muris, R.	..	..	..	418
Anderson, S. W.	..	..	..	327
Broome, W. F.	..	..	..	286

(Signed) G. S. Smith, *Presiding Officer*  
M. Ellis, E. J. Willson, M. Hudson,  
M. Willoughby, J. Peperell, J. E. Binder,  
H. Fitz-Gerald, S. J. Green. *Scrutineers.*

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

For many years it has been apparent that the increasing load of work on the Honorary Officers was in need of alleviation and also that the revision of both national and divisional membership records was very necessary. The problems involved have been carefully considered by the Organization Sub-Committee and a detailed plan formulated, a plan which the Council approved. Some mention of the changes in membership procedure may be found elsewhere in this issue.

The Council considered the regulations for the registration of libraries and decided that, in their opinion, such registration should not be dependent on the application of the individual librarian.

It is many years since the Honorary Fellowship of this Association was awarded to one of our colleagues. Mr. A. Ll. Carver of Portsmouth, a former President and Vice-President, a far-sighted friend who has given many years service to us, was made an Honorary Fellow of the Association by unanimous resolution of the Council.

And so after the Vice-President and Mr. Tighe had thanked the President for his services as Honorary Secretary during 1946 and 1947 the Council left Chaucer House for their distant homes.

E. A. C.

## You and Your Association

FOR many years the Association has been conscious that the distribution of the *Assistant* and the records of membership have been inaccurate and out of date.

This problem has been tackled by the Organization Sub-Committee of the Council and it has been decided that in future all applications for membership of the A.A.L. are to be made direct to the Library Association, and that the Library Association records of membership of the A.A.L. will be forwarded and maintained at divisional level. From these divisional records the mailing list of the *Assistant* will be revised and after May, all copies will be distributed, in bulk where possible, through the appropriate library.

To sum up :—

- (1) Future applications for membership and renewals of existing membership are to be forwarded to the Library Association, Chaucer House, Malet Place, London, W.C.1. *It is absolutely essential that all those who wish to retain membership of the A.A.L. indicate this on the Library Association subscription renewal form.*
- (2) If you change your division notify the Hon. Membership Secretary—Mr. L. H. Sidwell, A.L.A., East Holborn Library, 34-36 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.
- (3) Starting with the May-June issue of the *Assistant* distribution will be carried out by the divisions through the library and not individually by post. You should, therefore, address enquiries when necessary to the Hon. Divisional Secretary.
- (4) Those members not attached to divisions will be maintained on the Central Register as at present and will not be affected by these changes in procedure. Enquiries from such members should be addressed to the Honorary Membership Secretary.

E. A. C.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

### ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1948

##### PRELIMINARY NOTICE

The 1948 Annual General Meeting will be held at Blackpool, on Wednesday, 7th July, 1948. It is hoped to publish full details of the programme in the May-June issue.

Notices of motion for this meeting must be submitted in writing to reach me within twelve days of the publication of this notice.

E. A. CLOUGH,

Central Library, Hull

Honorary Secretary

## Inaugural Meeting

ONE hundred and eighty members were present in the Council Chamber of Chaucer House on Thursday, 22nd January when the President—Mr. E. Cave—rose to welcome Mr. P. S. J. Welsford, representing the Library Association; Mr. John Metcalfe, the President of the Australian Institute of Librarians; and Mr. A. L. Rowse, Fellow of All Souls, who was to speak on "The Use of History."

Mr. Rowse, a vital Celtic character, was, from the outset, determined to enjoy himself and quickly abandoned any pretence of a formal lecture. He ranged over the English character, science versus history, history as intellectual training and the need for history as a background to politics with a charm and conviction of rightness that left the writer of these notes gasping.

The pleasures of history were discussed in a quieter mood. The never-ending fascination of the English countryside when viewed as a background to the historical pageant could only be excelled by the intellectual pleasure of the study of man and his discoveries.

In these few words it is not possible to give anything approaching a critical evaluation of this combative address, and so perhaps we should conclude with Mr. Rowse's final words: "*The world to-day does not want more faith and more belief, it wants more quiet common sense and understanding, and these are just the qualities the English can give to the world.*"

E. A. C.

## Students' Problems

A. J. WALFORD

### THE DECEMBER EXAMINATIONS

THE rôle of armchair critic is, I suppose, resented as much in the sphere of examinations as in any other. Here the critic has no share in the toil and sweat of the poor examinee, is immune from the nervous tension of examination day, and is merely tempted to cast a comfortable and tolerant eye over a set of questions to which he will never again have to devote 180 minutes of his time. But, having admitted all this, my fellow-contributors and I still feel that it is worthwhile to offer some guidance to examinees both past and future.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION : by B. I. Palmer

**Paper 1.**—A nice easy paper which asked for little knowledge, but some intelligence, in answering the questions. Q.4 seemed the only one about the meaning of which anyone felt doubt. Presumably it called for consideration of methods of getting copies of popular books to a clamorous public in the quickest possible time, *i.e.*, duplication and briefer loan periods. Some, unfortunately, overlooked the adjective "popular" and dealt with methods of producing the clamour from the public.

**Paper 2.**—The second paper called for more knowledge of librarianship, as was only to be expected. Q.1 demanded in effect comment on one of our reasons for classifying, by asking how we could manage if we didn't. The answer was "go round and pick out the books with or without the aid of a catalogue." Q.2 was a gift for the open-eyed assistant, and Q.3 required a little text-book learning. Questions 4 and 5 could not have been more direct; but Q.6 might have given pause to a few candidates. Newcomers to a dictionary catalogue might not yet have realized the subject entries as an index, because they are sorted into the general sequence. The appearance of subject index entries in a classified catalogue are sufficiently distinctive to be recognisable, whether in a separate sequence or included in an omnibus index.

**Paper 3.**—In the third paper we find one question which calls for some semi-original thought, and the rest quite straightforward "what-do-you-knows." Perhaps Q.4 was a little difficult, as contemporary youngsters do not seem to read poetry from choice. Q.5 asked for a list, and has caused some post-examination anxiety that the lists made were not long enough.

**Paper 4.**—This has been generally voted the most difficult of the four, yet examination of it does not reveal any extraordinary demands. Q.1 is equally possible for public or special library assistants. Q.2 is surely answerable from tutors' notes, if not from actual experience of the books themselves. Q.3 appears difficult only because the object of the research is named. It simply calls for a statement of elementary research procedure in any query, such as is outlined in Cowley. If any student felt this to be too long-winded a method for this particular query, it was open to him to indicate any short cuts. The list of rules called for in Q.4 should not have been beyond the powers of the veriest junior, and experience in a modern library, or a good chat with someone who has had such experience, should have been enough to provide a good answer to Q.5.

In general, the examiners appear to have kept very well within the syllabus. There is little in these questions to intimidate, and plenty of scope for self-expression. One gathers an impression that the examiners were not seeking a harvest of professional knowledge. The tone of the papers seems to indicate a desire to find out whether the candidate understood a little of current practice. Provided he answered intelligently, legibly and in English, I am sure any candidate will pass.

### REGISTRATION : Classification

It has become customary to praise the Library Association examinations when their scope is balanced. Credit must also be given when, as in this instance, allowance is made for the candidate who works in a non-public library or who is familiar with a scheme other than the Dewey. Q.8, for example, asks for details of display material on the Palestine issue; "any recognized scheme may be used to illustrate." Q.6, again, touches on the value of a special classification, as opposed to the "general" schemes, to its particular librarian.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The treatment of the Generalia and Literature classes by Dewey and Brown (or Library of Congress) was the burden of two questions, and students probably snapped at them, but I hope they abstained from tabulating the classes concerned. The aim should be to work such knowledge into the answer, rather more difficult. Q.1 asked for straightforward definitions. As to "scheme" and "schedule," one recalls Mr. Sayers' words: a classification scheme or system is the complete written record; "its parts are its schedules." Q.10 was for readers of Dr. Savage's recent book, although it invited an independent line in discussing the respective functions of classification and display. I doubt whether display is much appreciated in a non-public library. Q.9, on the use of classification in a junior library, is the usual leading question writ small. One needs to insist on the value of this type of classification as an introduction to the larger, more intricate world of the adult departments, while also examining the value of, say, Dewey, in the light of the average school curriculum.

Finally—for most examinees—an explanation was asked of Ranganathan's canons on the hospitality of a notation "in chain and array." It was unfair to assume that the ordinary student had read the original text, but fair enough to assume that Mr. Sayers' *Manual* had been consulted on the subject. The hospitality of a notation "in chain" is, roughly, expansibility in subdivision by means of decimalization, A-Z order, etc.; "in array."—mnemonics as the common currency between different classes.

### REGISTRATION: Cataloguing. By A. Butcher

There has been some criticism of the new syllabus on the ground that candidates do not have to pass a test in practical work in the Registration Examination. The December Cataloguing paper shows that the examiners are fully aware of this requirement. Four practical questions were set in the second half of the paper of which three had to be attempted. Few candidates will have any complaint with this part of the paper. The questions appear in a familiar form and are fair and straightforward.

The first half of the paper is not so well balanced, QQ.3 and 5 on types of catalogues cover the same ground and must have repetitive answers. Q.2 asks for an historical account in addition to five instances where the B.M. code differs from the A.A. code. The first part of the question appears to be outside the scope of the syllabus and the whole question would involve more than 30 minutes' writing.

Q.1 asks for definitions of ten terms (one of them incorrectly spelt). An easy question, although some of the terms are more usually associated with the Bibliography examination. The paper includes a question aimed at the university or county librarian asking for a consideration of their problems. An acquaintance with recent articles in the professional journals would have enabled the candidate to supplement text-book views.

Most candidates would deal with Q.7 as joint author entry, although some were confused by the Yale Clinic and the fact that the book was in three parts. Note that specimen entries are required and it is not sufficient merely to indicate entries. The transcript of the title page in Q.8 contains some extraneous matter but presents no real difficulty. It is possible that marks were lost by transcribing the author's name incorrectly.

Q.9 involves a detailed knowledge of seven A.A. code rules with original examples for each rule. The examiners evidently intend that the candidate with a good memory will have to write quickly to obtain full marks in this question.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

### REGISTRATION : Bibliography. By A. Butcher

A fair, well-balanced and comprehensive paper. The student who had planned his revision under the main headings of the syllabus should have had little difficulty with this paper.

Some students will have avoided Q.1 (specification for a bulletin of additions), because they are not familiar with the "technical jargon" involved. This is a mistake. This question is meant to assess the candidate's understanding of the materials and processes of book production, under such main headings as :—

- (a) Number
- (b) Frequency of publication
- (c) Number of pages
- (d) Size of paper and print page
- (e) Layout (double or single column)
- (f) Paper (quality, colour, etc.)
- (g) Cover (including details of sewing)
- (h) Type (Fount, face, size, setting, etc.)
- (i) Proof and delivery.

The notes asked for on eight terms in Q.2 must be short ; with less than four minutes per term the candidate should present selective notes only. A test for ability in presentation. Specification for a reprint of a classic novel (Q.3) calls for some of Q.1 headings, with particular attention to binding, paper and type. QQ.4 and 8 are both "text-book" questions ; the former is fully dealt with in McKerrow's *Introduction*, pp. 180-183 ; the latter, in Coutts and Stephen. Q.5, on the main causes of deterioration of paper and books, requires concentration on both the physical properties of the materials used and on the chemical processes to which they are subjected.

In identifying wood engraving, mezzotint and aquatint illustrations (Q.6), few candidates could have had time to mention more than some of the relevant points. Q.7, again, was a difficult question to answer in 30 minutes. Each photo-mechanical process is suitable to particular kinds of work which may be used in a "well-printed book." Format (Q.9) can assist the bibliographer to identify a book, to assign the date of printing, to distinguish between editions and to detect forgeries, variants and cancels. Recognition of format is made possible through : (a) Signatures ; (b) Watermark ; (c) Chain lines ; (d) Register ; (g) Pagination and foliation ; (f) Catchwords ; (g) Gatherings. The point to stress is that the size of the page is no direct guide to the format of the book.

To compare book-printing in 1600 with that in 1947 (Q.10) demands wide reading. Comparison should include composition, making ready, imposition, inking, perfecting, and "feeding." Comment on problems would include displacement of type by ink balls, variants through correction at the press, errors in folding and perfecting, errors in composition, foul case, etc.

### REGISTRATION : Assistance to Readers

This paper was both balanced and searching, but certainly not beyond average capabilities. Some questions demanded brevity, and others, careful discussion. Notes only were called for in Q.2 (on eight standard dictionaries), Q.5 (on five of ten reference tools) and Q.8 (on five periodical lists and indexes) and they were all worth answering. To those abreast with American practice, Q.1 (on co-operative booklists) should have been attractive. It is a timely subject for debate when paper is becoming scarcer ; it



## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

might even be a move towards regional co-operative cataloguing. British examples of co-operative lists include the Derby, W. Riding and Lancashire.

A whole question was devoted to the difference between 'primary' and 'secondary' bibliography (Q.10), three examples of each being asked for. Dr. Esdaile's definitions are not altogether clear; it would seem that primary bibliographies are those compiled at first hand (e.g., the national bibliographies of copyright libraries), whereas secondary bibliographies are essentially derivative, drawn from and based on those primary sources; they are often subject lists. Q.7 asked for details of the background reading which the librarian needs to keep him *au courant* with students' needs. Q.6 dealt with the training, on the other hand, of the new reader "in the use of the library." The choice of books is only one aspect of this wide issue.

One type of question is instinctively avoided, the type which asks where you would look for information on Japanese miniature gardens, and the like. Such was Q.3, but it allowed a choice of two of 4 subjects. And were the two so hard to choose? 'The euckoo' suggest "A bird book for the pocket," Newton's Dictionary, the Cambridge Natural History, encyclopedic data, and the usual indexes. Q.9 was of similar calibre, but it demanded a sense of priority. To assess correctly the attitude of the British public to Indian affairs during the first half of the nineteenth century is surely to give prior consideration to such primary sources as the *Times* and *Hansard*, and not to quote a list of history text-books.

### REGISTRATION: History of English Literature

Of the 10 questions set, 3½ dealt with poetry, 3½ with prose, 2 with the drama, and 1 with the novel, the chief periods of English literature being covered with equal care. The questions on a Shakespearean historical play was, no doubt, acclaimed by autumn theatre-goers, just as readers of Gerald Bullett's *George Eliot* received their reward in Q.9. But in order to trace the development of English prose from Malory to Francis Bacon (Q.3), a task full of interest, one must be sure of the date at either end. The various versions of the Bible, from Wycliffe to 1611, and the great translations of the Elizabethan age bulk large; if we accept 1626 as our final date, there is also room to consider some worthy exponents of what Saintsbury termed ornate prose; and if we can squeeze in Burton, why not Donne?

To name and describe the chief books associated with the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century is asking more of the candidate than paragraphs of Milton and Bunyan. George Fox's *Journal* and Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* were also important; strictly speaking, one should also include Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, product of an earlier century, but much read by Puritans in the troublous times of the Stuarts.

I would quarrel with two of the questions, one because it is too lean, and the other because it asks too much of the candidate's thirty minutes. Q.6 asks for notes on two of four minor men of letters—Rochester, Prior, Gay and Edward Young. An example of "a general knowledge of the outstanding works in the whole field of English literature"? One wonders. Q.7, on the other hand, ran up and down the whole gamut of the Romantic Movement precursors, from James Thomson, through Collins, Gray, Goldsmith and Chatterton, to Cowper, Blake and Burns, asking for comments on their various styles and the mention of their best-known works. A major operation! Apart from a complaint of this want of balance, I have only praise for a very reasonable paper.



## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

REGISTRATION : Library Organization and Administration

FINAL : Library Organization and General Librarianship. By B. Bennett

To be fair to the examiners a candidate should expect to be tested on his knowledge of the syllabus gained by a thorough reading and revision of the set books, on his familiarity with current developments as expressed in articles in professional periodicals, and by his ability to do a little original thinking on the practical problems of librarianship. The papers set in the organization sections of the Registration and Final examinations last month cannot be said to extend beyond the bounds of the above criteria.

Most of the questions were straightforward, and with a choice of six out of ten in each paper, and a "within-question" choice in Q.F.1 and Q.F.8, candidates should not have experienced much difficulty. There were some good debating questions on familiar subjects: Q.R.1 on staff manuals; Q.R.4 on the Browne and Dickman issue systems (dealt with very fully in Miss Carnell's new book); Q.R.7 on extension work—although this question presupposes that extension work *should* be undertaken—and Q.R.9 on book reservations. In Q.R.4 there was a printer's error. It is to be hoped that the omission of a final 'e' did not lead candidates into writing about James Duff Brown! Those tackling Q.R.6 should have been sure on what was meant by "extra mural studies." This bit of jargon means the cultural classes which universities sponsor or assist, such as W.E.A. and University Extension Lectures. The analytical issue record (Q.R.2) incorporating pictures and other illustrative material demands a little initiative in providing for this extra material, but otherwise it is a concrete question with a pictorial answer. The plan of a secondary school library required in Q.R.8 should not have been too elaborate or large. An outside estimate of two books per pupil would be sufficient in calculating the book stock required. The special problems of dealing with music in Q.R.5 and Q.F.5 are fully described in McColvin's book. Q.F.7 on co-operation with county music and drama advisers is one for thinking out on the spot. These comparative new-comers are responsible for fostering amateur dramatic and music-making societies and also appreciation and play-reading classes.

The Carnegie Trust at last has a question about it (Q.F.3). Those students who read its annual reports should know of its assistance not only to libraries but in land settlement, social services and adult education. The Library Association turns the spotlight on itself in Q.F.4. Those lucky people who *do* read the introductory pages in the Year Book must have enjoyed this question! Another question (Q.R.10) which should have been to the liking of those familiar with its subject was that on the Sheffield inter-loan scheme for technical literature. However, this was fully dealt with in the *Record* for February, 1938. The London union catalogue of periodicals was worth a mention in answering the second part of this question. The Inter-Allied Book Centre (Q.R.3) directed by Mr. B. M. Headicar was also the subject of an article in the *Record*. It was opened in September, 1944 and described in the following month.

Candidates who described the Public Record Office as their choice of library in Q.F.1 would doubtless have gone on to tackle Q.F.2 on the National Register of Archives. The history question (Q.F.6) is a good one. It is to be presumed that the British library movement is meant as both Acts quoted are British ones. The filing of "library administrative documents" (Q.F.8) has a fearsome ring. Is this the familiar file of correspondence plus everything else arranged in classified folders on the Jast scheme? Library insurance risks (Q.F.9) is an unusual but legitimate question. In assessing values of catalogues and stock records the time of compilation factor would be the

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

predominating one. The British Museum regulations relating to publications not required (Q.F.10) refers to such items as timetables and trade catalogues and are fully dealt with in Partridge's "Legal deposit of books."

### FINAL : Bibliography and Book Selection

This paper continues, despite its syllabus, to concentrate largely on enumerative bibliography. Advisedly so, for the other aspects of bibliography are well covered in the Registration, Group B (iii) and Final, Part 5 (d) examinations. In the Final, Part 1 paper, Group A questions are, accordingly, of a routine nature and call for little comment. In Groups B and C periodical literature is given two questions. In the plausible belief that charity begins at home, the examiners ask, in Q.3, for notes on the principal periodicals on librarianship in England and the United States. The *Journal of Documentation* and *Special Libraries* deserved a mention. Q.5 was of a more searching nature, calling for a choice of ten periodicals in either art, electrical engineering or world affairs, either for general or special libraries. This certainly gave the specialist his chance.

Descriptions of five or nine reference books were asked for in Q.9. One of these, the *American Guides*, should be remembered in connection with the New Deal project for unemployed black-coated workers in the various States, directing their energies to research in and compilation of local histories. The Writers' Programs of the States have now issued well over a hundred guides.

Q.4, on national bibliographies, was very acceptable to students of Esdaile : (a) demanded a knowledge of Watt, Quérard and Heinsius ; and (b) of three current European bibliographies. The reappearance of the *Deutsche National-bibliographie* will, no doubt, have been noted. Q.6, on the various types of Government publications and guides to them, is one that should be set periodically ; it covers both ' Parliamentary Papers ' and non-parliamentary (or H.M.S.O.) publications ; it includes legislation, S.R. & O., reports of Government Departments and of Commissions, and so-forth.

The remaining questions, on book selection, dealt with a commercial and technical collection (Q.10) and with English literature (Q.7). For whom the " representative collection " is intended in the latter is not stated ; presumably, a public library. The local standard of reading tastes, and with it the existence of dramatic societies, reading circles and literary institutions, is an obvious nettle to grasp ; it will clearly affect the balance between modern and pre-20th century literature, between texts and criticisms, between selections and complete works.

### FINAL : Library Routine and Administration (a) Public Libraries. By F. N. McDonald

If you are taking the examination next June it may help you to know that December's paper was difficult. It was quite certainly designed to test one's mature judgment and the emphasis was on current problems. Few of the questions could have been answered from a study of the standard text-books alone. A thorough knowledge of the latest developments as reported at conferences and in professional periodicals was also needed.

There appears to be no pattern in the paper. It is divided into four groups, but the questions comprising each group have nothing in common. Candidates who had been led by previous papers to expect a group of questions on library law were disappointed. There was none. But why should there be ? It is even less useful to memorize Public Library Acts than to memorize the Anglo-American Code. It will do no harm if none but the most general questions on library law are set in the future. Candidates can then concentrate on learning something useful.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Individually the questions were quite interesting. Q.1 required a knowledge of the American Library Association *Post-war standard for public libraries*, 1943, which I imagine few librarians can have seen and about which remarkably little has been written in British periodicals. Q.2 dealt with school libraries and question three with temporary buildings (not temporary premises observe). QQ.5 and 6 were evidently intended to be taken together. Here candidates have a legitimate complaint. Surely it is too much to expect in one hour a sketch plan of the various floors and a section through a large Central Library giving dimensions and showing the allocation of departments? Q.7 included an enigmatic phrase. What are "rules for the control of the use by" outside organizations of a library's Exhibition Hall or Lecture Rooms? Has the word "control" any special significance? This is the sort of awkward phrasing which wastes an examinee's time. The rules can only have special reference to the recent agreement on Schedule A assessment as far as charges for admission are concerned. The paper ended with questions on inter-library loans, functions of the National Central Library and "departmentalism" as practised by a number of American libraries.

### Entente Cordiale

JEAN BINDER

"**P**ARDON, madame. Je suis bibliothécaire assistante anglaise. Puis-je regarder autour de votre bibliothèque?" Rehearsing this little speech, I set out to explore some libraries in France, while on holiday there last year. The response in every case was welcoming and most helpful. Such a wealth of material was placed at my disposal that I can only mention the points which seemed most interesting.

First then, some general information. Under the Ministry of Education is a Libraries Department, at the head of which is a Directrice des Bibliothèques. (Here be it noted that the great majority of librarians are women.) The Bibliothèque Nationale and the university libraries are administered and financed by the State. The twenty municipal libraries of Paris come under the City Council, but the Directrice des Bibliothèques is again at their head. Certain other municipal libraries which have valuable collections of old books are administered by the town but inspected by state officials. Then there are municipal libraries which are entirely controlled by the town's representatives. Finally, there are, of course, special libraries for various subjects and purposes.

I started at the university library of Lille, a northern industrial town. Through the entrance-hall one passes straight into a large, oval-shaped reading room. There are comparatively few books here; students have to fill in a slip and present it to one of the garçons on duty, who then brings the required volume from the stock room. (Garçon is here translatable as "attendant" rather than "boy," the gentlemen in question being of middle to advanced age!) There are about 650,000 volumes in the stock room, arranged by accession numbers, in three series according to size (folio, quarto, and octavo or less). As in most libraries I visited, the arrangement is from the bottom to the top of the bookcase, something unfamiliar to me. Against the walls are piles of little wooden blocks, one of which is used to replace any book which is removed. On the "spine" of the block is pasted a slip bearing the accession number, the borrower's name, and the date the book was borrowed.

Housed in a corridor off the reading room is the catalogue, in dictionary form and

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

hand-written on cards about  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ . It has its own rules formulated by the librarian, but based on the code of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Nearby is a periodicals room. Periodicals are filed here for a year, and are recorded by the Kardex system. The arrival of each copy is noted on its appropriate card (arranged alphabetically by title). The year's supply is entered in the periodicals stock register (a bound volume), the periodicals are sent for binding (henceforth to dwell in the stock room) and the new year's periodicals are entered on fresh cards in the cabinet.

The staff consists of a chief librarian, four assistants with State diplomas in librarianship (two of whom are graduates), one shorthand-typist, and six garçons.

The same chief directs the public library system in Lille. The original public library was destroyed in 1918, and never rebuilt. Even now there is only one main branch open for 18 hours a week (including 2 hours on Sunday mornings, but closed on Mondays, like most libraries, museums, etc.). There are about four smaller branches in different parts of the town. All the technical work is performed in a little office in the university library. The assistant who does this showed me over the main branch. It is classified by Dewey. Against a cool background of pale green, each class is represented by a gay colour, and this is repeated in all the guides, from the general one hanging in a frame facing the entrance to the upstanding tabs on the card catalogue. The books, all paper-backs, soon have to be bound, and are done in the following manner: the covers are of linen, but on the spine is a strip of sheep-skin (again in the "class-colour"). On this the class number is lettered in gold. The average price of an octavo book is 150 francs and its binding costs about the same amount.

Present conditions are that readers have to be over 18 years of age and living in Lille. Issues are about 1,200 a week. A room has been set aside for use as a children's library, when time and funds permit. One felt that this bright little library had great potentialities, some of which should be realised quite soon. The librarian also described to me how in the north a bibliobus service had been set up. "C'est un nouveauté!" she exclaimed. It seemed to me that library provision had been neglected, but that now the French are venturing ahead.

To Paris then, and the greatest library in France. Like the British Museum Department of Printed Books, the Bibliothèque Nationale was built up from a Royal Library and various bequests, and now has a right to a copy of every book in its own country. Built in the seventeenth century and converted into a palace by Mazarin, in 1720 the Regent installed there the 200,000 volumes of Louis XIV's library. I examined its catalogue—large volumes printed in Latin.

One enters through a narrow archway into a courtyard. Across this and through a door one comes into a hall where small exhibitions of books and prints are held. Facing one is the reading room, built during Napoleon III's reign. This is very lofty, rectangular in shape, with a kind of apse at the far end where is placed the service desk. The upper parts of the walls are decorated with Corot-like murals and the vaulted ceiling is brightly gilt: one has an impression of cleanness and light. Readers' tables are ranged in rows on either side of a centre aisle.

One can walk all the way round the room through an avenue of book stacks; tall ones on the outside and shorter ones, interspersed with some readers' tables, on the inside. At each corner of the room is a placard catalogue for all the books in its quarter. Each consists of about five sheets (some  $20'' \times 8''$ ) framed in aluminium and hinged together. Each entry consists of a  $\frac{1}{4}''$  strip on which is entered the location, author, brief title, and date, e.g.,

0142 ROHAN (Duc de). Mémoires. 1837.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Entries are arranged alphabetically by author under the main division ; the latter is given on a strip coloured differently from those of its component entries.

Near the entrance is a card catalogue for books which are not available in the reading room, but are in the Catalogue Room or the Réserve. Many readers visit the Catalogue Room. One descends to a basement at the side of the reading room, and enters a large cool room with cream-coloured walls of polished stone. Here I was handed a guide of some hundred pages which began "L'ancienneté, le nombre et la complexité des catalogues au Département des Imprimés sont des obstacles souvent déplorés par les usagers de la Bibliothèque Nationale . . . " !

Briefly, then, one finds the following catalogues. First, that for the Louis XIV library, already mentioned. Then, for older collections acquired before 1880 there are some bound volumes of microfilm entries. All these older catalogues were photographed and are now reproduced in one author sequence. Both sides of each page are covered by the prints, 32 to a side and each measuring about  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ ". As they are incorporated in the general printed catalogue the microfilm entries will gradually be destroyed.

Now we come to the general author catalogue in printed volumes ; work on this was begun in 1897 and should be finished by 1950. For authors whose works have appeared since the publication of the volume which would have contained their names (i.e., especially those whose names come early in the alphabet) there is a supplementary catalogue of over 1,000 "volumes." These cover additions from 1882 to 1936. The entries are on sheaves ; four piles of these are placed one below another and strung between boards to make volumes. For the same books there is a subject catalogue (specific subjects arranged alphabetically) also in "sheaf-volumes."

Additions since 1936 are recorded in card catalogues, one for authors and one for subjects. Anonymous books in all of these catalogues are included, under the first words of their titles not articles, amongst the author entries.

There are two special card catalogues, for French Biography, and for a collection on Spain and Portugal. Finally, there is a card catalogue of periodicals arranged in dictionary form. It has entries under all the headings one could think of—titles, subjects, editors, places of publication, etc.

These catalogues represent the contents of the Bibliothèque Nationale. In addition, round the walls of the Catalogue Room are ranged thousands of volumes of printed catalogues and bibliographies of special subjects. In the centre are shelves containing printed catalogues of great foreign libraries, such as the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books. A great deal of space is taken up by cabinets of Library of Congress cards. These are surmounted by 167 volumes of (L.C.) author entries reproduced in miniature and set out in columns in a manner similar to that of the microfilm catalogue.

Leaving this catalogue-land, I reascended to the reading room and went to an entrance marked "Salle de la Réserve." I went upstairs only to be confronted by a locked door, but on my ringing a bell at the side, the door flew open, admitting me to a corridor leading to the Reserve Room. Here were books about books from every viewpoint, their making, illustration, history, book auction records, examples of fine printing, etc. Opening off the far side is the Music Room : I only had time for a brief glance around here. It contains only books about music (scores being kept in another room yet further on). There are separate card catalogues for composers, instruments forms, etc., and a score or book might be entered in any or all of these.

Most exciting was my visit to another room where the very valuable books are kept.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The librarian of the Réserve (incidentally the only male librarian I met) told me that few people were admitted here and then only accompanied by himself. Unfortunately, I had not time to see much of this wonderful collection of original editions and fine old bindings. They were all in glass-topped cases. The librarian removed the covers from some of these to show me the best, at the same time telling me the names of the binders—I remember Grolier was among them. There were tiny prayer books exquisitely tooled and enormous albums glowing with colours like stained-glass windows. I remarked on some exhibits which had pictures on them worked in brocade and surrounded by lace frills, only to feel ignorant when the librarian told me that there were many books like that in England!

(To be concluded.)

## On the Editor's Table

Rose, Oscar, ed. *Radio Broadcasting and Television: an annotated bibliography.* 1947. H. W. Wilson Co., \$1.50.

It is difficult for an English reviewer to assess the true value of this book. American radio is a comparatively unknown quantity in this country: its development has taken place on lines completely different from those on which our own system has been built, and whilst admirers of Mr. Bob Hope whooped with joy during the war years when lease-lend made transcriptions of his programmes available to British listeners, the average reaction to the preponderance of "sponsored" programmes has been one of relief that "it never happened here." Some of the consequences of sponsoring are reflected in Mr. Rose's annotations.

The editor has been intimately associated with American broadcasting for several years, first as an announcer and later as a programme director, so that his critical annotations can be taken as authoritative. He has divided the field of Radio into seven sections, with such headings as "History and General Survey," "Radio as a Career," "Program Techniques," "Radio Advertising" and "Systems and Legislation." Technical (i.e., radio engineering) books are excluded. Many of the items listed are pamphlets of a few pages, but one is overawed by such entries as "Socolow, A. Walter. *The Law of Radio Broadcasting.* 1939. 1,566 pp. 2 vols." One of particular interest to Librarians occurs in the "Program Content and the Public" section: "Hyers, Faith Holmes. *The Library and the Radio.* University of Chicago Press. 1938. 101 pp. Probably the most adequate and complete book in the field. Chapter 1 shows ways in which the library may publicize radio programs, furnish books, radio talks, etc., pertaining to radio shows and how libraries may encourage group listening. Chapter 2 offers techniques for librarians who would become effective broadcasters. Chapter 3 gives the broadcasting experiences of various libraries the country over. The final chapter, essentially, is a plan of action by libraries and radio stations."

As would be expected, Part Two, covering the much more recently developed field of Television, is briefer, extending over only four pages. The essential Title and Author Index completes the book.

As a guide to available material, and as a revealer of gaps to be filled (Mr. Rose cites the dearth of books on the technique of announcing, and on "creative broadcasting from the listeners' point of view") this book has its interest for the student of American affairs. An English counterpart would be welcome and timely, forming a suitable pendant to the recent Silver Jubilee celebrations of our own B.B.C.

S. W. A.

## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

### A.A.L. Correspondence Courses

The A.A.L. Education Committee has pleasure in publishing the results in the June, 1947, Examination of the students who took correspondence courses from April, 1946, to June, 1947 :

	<i>No. of students</i>	<i>Completed course and sat for exam.</i>	<i>Passes</i>	<i>Failed</i>	<i>% of Passes</i>
Entrance ..	73	46 (63%)	37	9	80%
Registration ..	226	111 (49%)	72	39	65%
Final .. ..	99	41 (41%)	30	11	73%
	<hr/> 398.	<hr/> 198 (49.7%)	<hr/> 139	<hr/> 59	<hr/> 70%

(One student gained an Honours in Final, Part 5(d).)

The percentage of passes for the whole examination compares favourably with the general pass figure of 54.93% of all those who sat in June, 1947. The general percentage of passes by students at Library Schools, in respect of Final and Registration Examinations only, was 73%.

So, it will readily be seen that the assistant who works conscientiously through a correspondence course has a good chance of success at the examination.

It will also be noticed that for every two assistants who commence a correspondence course, only one completes it and sits for the examination. The A.A.L. Education Committee has noted this with concern but has found that it is a common experience of correspondence colleges. Ambitious students start a course (and pay for it !) but cannot keep up their studies for a variety of reasons.

As the pass figures of both Library School and Correspondence Course students are well above the average, it would appear that the percentage of failures amongst students not taking an organized course of study must be high. The A.A.L. Education Committee feel that more could be done to assist the part-time student (1,090 part-time students sat for the June Examination, excluding Preliminary Examination candidates, compared with 217 students from Library Schools) and has asked all Divisions to organize One-day Courses on various aspects of library work. Many Divisions are continuing to sponsor oral classes, of course. East Midlands Division has already held one successful series of One-day Courses in Reference Library Work, the Greater London Division has commenced a series, the Midland Division has a series planned to begin in March (apart from its active participation in the Birmingham Summer School) and there is news that the Kent Division is also planning a similar series.

Finally, the A.A.L. Education Committee appeals to members of the generation who have set these new examination hurdles for younger assistants to come forward and help them by offering their services as correspondence course tutors.

W. P.

Correspondence Courses in the sections mentioned below will be arranged to run from April to June of the following year, and from November to December of the following year. The Courses, conducted under the auspices of the A.A.L. (Section of the L.A.), comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints and advice on study and practical work and questions or subjects for essays upon which the tutor will write comments or corrections.



## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The subjects treated and the respective fees are as follows :—

**Entrance Examination.**—The Course covers the whole of the L.A. requirements for this examination. Fee, £2 10s. 0d.

**Registration Examination.**—Group (a) (i) Classification—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. ; (ii) Cataloguing—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. Group (b) (iii) and (iv) Bibliography and Assistance to Readers in the choice of books—Fee, £2 10s. 0d. Group (c) (v) Library Organization and Administration—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. ; (vi) History of English Literature—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.

**Final Examination.**—Part 1, Bibliography and Book Selection—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 2, Library Organization and General Librarianship—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 3, Library Routine and Administration : (a) Public Libraries—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. ; (b) University and College Libraries—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. ; (v) Special Libraries and Information Bureaux—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 4, Literary Criticism and Appreciation : (a) Modern Literature—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 5, Specialist Certificates : (c) Advanced Classification—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. ; Advanced Cataloguing—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. ; (d) Historical Bibliography—Fee, £2 0s. 0d.

Non-members of the Library Association are charged double fees.

Students wishing to enter for a Course must obtain an application form from and send it (together with the appropriate fee) to the Joint Hon. Education Secretaries, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses respectively.

**Important.**—Before entering for a Course, students are particularly advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations governing the examination, as printed in *The Library Association year book*. Any queries concerning the examinations or the syllabus should be sent direct to The Library Association and not to The Association of Assistant Librarians.

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*Matters relating to Correspondence Courses and A.A.L. publications to the Joint Hon. Education Secretaries. Orders for THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, advertisement space, enquiries as to advertisement rates, etc., to the Hon. Treasurer. Enquiries relating to membership and delivery of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT to the Hon. Membership Secretary. MSS. and letters for publication, preferably typed and double-spaced, to the Hon. Editor. No payment is made for articles published in THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. All other enquiries to the Hon. Secretary.*